



OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

10 Grand Central, 155 E 44th Street, Suite 1710

Tel: (212) 687-2350 Fax: (212) 949-6872

E-mail: newyork@mfa.gov.ct.tr

16 June 2020

Excellency,

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 29 May 2020 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/2020/455) and of General Assembly (A/74/868), which, once again, distort the facts on the ground. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring to your kind attention the following.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called “infringements of international air traffic regulations” and “violations of Cyprus’ national airspace”, I wish to emphasize that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are carried out with the full knowledge and permission of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent body to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace and Notices to Airmen are issued in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

The false assertions, similarly, in the said letter regarding the use of Turkish Cypriot ports are also baseless since the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, these contentions ignore the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent, self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As regards the false statements concerning Ercan Airport in the North, it should be reiterated that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control center and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot side’s refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its policy of isolating the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which it has full jurisdiction and control.

H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

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Moreover, the unjust isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to reinforce by unilaterally calling all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus "illegal", is in complete violation of international law and is incompatible with the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), where he clearly states "*I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)*".

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ensuring aviation safety and security by regulating all aspects of civil aviation, including the operation of airports, the management of air traffic and etc. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary upgrades have been performed to keep up with the developing technology. Moreover, the number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the growing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control center is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control center in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2019 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at 4,035,276. Moreover, in 2019, 27,760 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 224,898 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric and remind that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.



İsmet Korukoğlu
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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